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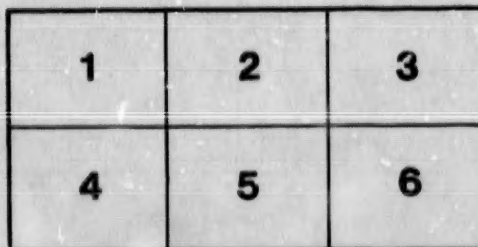
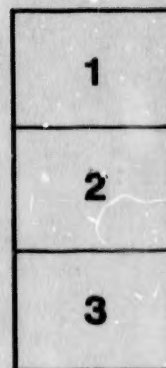
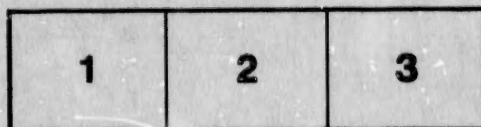
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TPL 3832

Relations between Great Brit. & Canada

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NEMO NEMINIS, *president***HIS SPEECH TOUCHING CANADA.***(Reprinted from the Hochelaga Post.)*

MR. NEMO NEMINIS was the next speaker. He said the character of this meeting, for numbers and influence, was worthy of the grave occasion which called them together and creditable to the spirit and intelligence of the Canadian people. The resolution committed to his care, presented the case which they had to consider, and he prayed their attention while he should read it:—

“Resolved,—That the recent discussions in both branches of the Imperial Legislature on the Defences of Canada, disclose a state of opinion and feeling on the part of British Statesmen which demands the prompt and serious consideration of the people of this province.”

Had the resolution been more specific, (he continued,) it might have pleased me better, but I am not disposed to quarrel with its general terms, since I find myself just now in such a ready position to rectify its defects by a reference to particulars. It is very evident from these discussions in the British Parliament, that we have not met the expectations of British statesmen in the provision which we have made for our defence in case of invasion. They treat our quota of militia, provided by the late act, as nothing, and think that we should multiply it ten-fold. But they do not seem to consider what such a multiplication would involve. Nor do they give us any reasonable assurance, for they cannot, that even a twenty-fold multiplication would be adequate for its intended purpose, if the dreadful emergency of war should come. Such differences of opinion between the Imperial and Provincial Legislatures can hardly be avoided when local legislation is reviewed by

persons at a distance. All the speakers felt that the relation of Canada to the mother country was a peculiar one, and none seemed satisfied with the present working of that relation. All felt that Canada was to all intents and purposes independent so far as the management of her internal affairs was concerned, and yet not independent if any strain of war should come. British statesmen seemed to feel that in such a relation the mother country had the heavy end of the lever to work, involving immense sacrifices of hard labor and hard cash, without any corresponding tangible advantage. Earl Grey, on the spur of the moment, in what he felt to be the pressing perplexity of the case, and forgetful for the time of the constitutional system of Canada, would have a mandate issued from the Colonial Office in London, requiring the Governor General to summon the Canadian Parliament and obtain, if possible, more satisfactory legislation. And if their Lordships' views were not met, then the Imperial troops were to be withdrawn from Canada. This course would have a significance which would be patent to every one, and the significance of the fact that it was suggested by a statesman of Lord Grey's standing, ought to be no less patent to all discerning persons. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, with the sagacity of an old diplomatist, saw in such a discussion of Colonial relations only a hastening of "the period when the mother country would have to separate from her colonies." In the House of Commons the people and parliament of Canada were well rated by some members, while others kindly extenuated their shortcomings and benevolently apologised for them. One member characterised the relations between Canada and Britain as rotten and mutually deceptive. Another wanted the British Government to make the people of Canada understand the fact the English people did not care a farthing for the Colonial adherence of Canada. Another, and a cabinet minister, said that he looked forward without apprehension and without regret to the separation of Canada from England.

Now this is plain speech, and though spoken in the British Parliament, it was intended for use in Canada. Many of us

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have been surprised at the utterance of such sentiments, but let us consider whether we ought to be so much surprised. The motto of "Ships, Colonies and Commerce," no longer stands where it formerly did in England's policy or practice. It is the great distinction of England as a nation, that she can march with the ages, and can accommodate herself to the progressive development of humanity. Apparently hard to move by the cautious conservatism of her nature, she has yet cherished in her bosom active and patient thinkers,—men of large discourse and fruitful brain,—who could look before and after,—and though she has stubbornly opposed their theories when first propounded, and for a long series of years, she has ended by accepting them, and acting upon them,—thus showing her practical wisdom, and securing her stability as a nation, while other nations were convulsed and overturned by revolution. Hence we have seen in our own time a radical change in her commercial policy after a prolonged conflict of opinion. And this change in her commercial policy involved a change in her Colonial policy, the results of which the people of Canada have already had a large experience. But the full measure of this change in its logical completion has not yet reached us. Nor is there any satisfactory evidence that we see it as clearly, or are ready to meet it as manfully, as we ought. The recent discussions in the British Parliament distinctly foreshadow, with respect to Canada, the logical completion of the established policy of the mother country. They distinctly point to separation and independence.

This, however, is no new thought with British statesmen. More than thirty years ago it was mooted among them. As far back as 1828, Mr. Huskisson, then Colonial Minister, thought that the time had come for the separation of Canada from the mother country, and her assumption of the position of an independent state. In 1854, the Earl of Ellenborough, in the House of Lords, adduced Mr. Huskisson's testimony in support of the views of separation which he then urged. Lord Ellenborough referred to the change which had taken place in the relations of Canada and Great Britain, arising out

of the changed commercial policy of the mother country. I hold in my hand a report of the noble Earl's speech, from which, if you desire it, I will read an extract. [Cries of read, read.] "What was the use," asked his Lordship, "what the practical advantage of continuing our connection with the Colonies? The connection might be of some small use in time of peace; but on the other hand consider the danger arising from it in matters relating to war. There could be no doubt that the chances of collision between this country and the United States were greatly increased by our connection with the North American Colonies. It was equally certain that in the event of war occurring between this country and the United States on grounds totally unconnected with the Colonies, they must, from their connexion with us, be drawn into the war, and their whole frontier would be exposed to the greatest calamities. Under these circumstances it was a matter worthy of serious consideration whether we should not endeavor, in the most friendly manner, to divest ourselves of a connexion which must prove equally onerous to both parties. The very idea of war with the United States was horrible. The event would be one of the greatest of evils,—one of the direst of human afflictions. Connected as we were in all the details of commerce, it would be more like tearing asunder the limbs of one human body, than the collision of two separate bodies. Why needlessly increase the chances of war? Our brethren on the other side of the Atlantic were very ambitious and very sensitive on the point of honor. So were we; and we were also extremely sensitive on the point of justice. Not only would we not endure injustice to ourselves, but we could not tolerate the perpetration of injustice to another. These considerations should lead us to regard a rupture with the United States as an event which might happen at some period. Under these circumstances he hoped that, at an early period, the Government would communicate with the leading persons in the Legislative Assemblies of the North American Colonies with the view of ascertaining their opinion on the subject of a separation. We should consult with them in the most friendly

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spirit, as if they were members of one and the same family, in which we felt a deep concern." These were Lord Ellenborough's views, expressed more than eight years ago. The Duke of Newcastle then expressed his astonishment at them, and spoke strongly against them. [A voice,—would he do so now?] I think he would not speak so strongly now, if we might judge from his more recent utterances. Lord Brougham followed the Duke and declared himself of those who desired a separation of Canada, as a Colony, from the mother country. He would not throw the Colonists over, nor abandon them. The idea of separation he said "was by no means novel." I quote his own words: "It had been entertained and expressed by many eminent men. It was an opinion shared in by Lord Ashburton and Lord St. Vincent; and those who held the doctrine of separation did so, not because they were disposed to undervalue the importance of Canada, but rather because they highly estimated the importance of that country. They believed that after a certain period of time,—after what was called 'passing the youth of nations,' that of a Colonial life,—the best thing that could happen to a country in Colonial connexion with an older state was, that *without any quarrel, without any coldness or alienation of any sort, but with perfect amity and good will, and on purely voluntary grounds, there should succeed to that connexion, a connexion between two free and independent states.*"

This, gentlemen, is the way in which the most eminent British statesmen speak in the highest council of the nation. Their speech directly concerns us,—comes close home to our business and bosoms,—and what have we to say of it? How do we regard it? Have we considered its significance and reflected on its bearing, as becometh our self respect as a free and prosperous people? Evidently, as our Governor General told us from a Montreal dinner table, a short time since, the present state of things cannot last much longer. But with our present relation, what state of things can we inaugurate which will be permanent and satisfactory to all parties? Shall we place the flower of our able bodied population under arms

for Imperial purposes, in view of possible wars of the empire? This is impossible. Our fields must be tilled and our branches of industry sustained. [A voice,—But if we should be invaded?] If we should be invaded we would defend ourselves by all the resources we could command, as we showed ourselves ready to do when the imminent peril of last winter was upon us. I will admit the possibility of invasion, but I have no present apprehension of it. Our neighbors on the other side of the line have as much fighting on their hands at present as they can well attend to, and every day of its continuance puts them under additional bonds to keep the peace toward us, and all the world. What then shall we do? [A voice,—Stir up the militia.] Yes, infuse new life and activity into our militia. This we should do as a clear matter of prudence. But who are to be the judges of what is prudent and sufficient in the premises? The Lords and Commons of England, or the people and Parliament of Canada? We must insist, and insist to the last, that we are the most competent judges of this matter. And here we see the anomaly of the existing relations between Canada and Britain. Our mother country does not wish to wrong or injure us. No Colonial child could have a mother more generous than she; but the sphere of her affairs is very widely extended and diversified, and as a matter of prudence towards some branches of her interest or service, she may be compelled to criticise our legislation and attempt a pressure on our legislative decisions. The recent discussions in the Lords and Commons on the defences of Canada, is an instance of what may take place. Then, again, there is the English press, to the criticisms of which, under the circumstances, we are legitimately exposed. We may feel that the parliament and press of England speak under panic, or out of imperfect information, and though their taunts may provoke us, we cannot deny their right to speak. A relation which involves this, is perilous to mutual peace and a permanent good understanding. When the member for Sheffield tells the House of Commons and the world, that he never will vote to tax the poor artisans of Sheffield to defend the rich inhabitants

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of Canada, can we deny the inherent justice of the ground he takes? Does our tariff list show any favor to the Sheffield cutler? When the *London Times* calls Canada a dead weight on England, can we point to any tangible benefit to the mother country resulting from the connexion? Let us not deceive ourselves by vague declamation about the glory and prestige of Colonial Empire. There was once a substantial meaning in these words, but that meaning departed from them when the former order of Colonial policy passed away. What then are we to do? Looking at the matter, not as grown up children, but as manly men, what are we to do? My answer is,—Prepare for an Independent National Position. [A voice,—We are loyal.] Oh my friend, nobody doubts your loyalty, or the loyalty of Sir Cornwall Lewis and Lord Ellenborough. The grave question which meets us here is not a question of loyalty or disloyalty, but a question as to how we can best strengthen the position and permanently serve the interests of that great nation,—mother of nations,—which we call our mother country. Is Canada a source of weakness to England or of strength? We are a weakness to England,—a most vulnerable point as any competent will testify. Why should we,—a community of and a half prosperous people, with an ample domain, implied resources,—why should we occupy a position to complicate her foreign policy and become a serious drain on her ways and means? Is such a position worthy of us in view of our origin and ancestry, the leading races of Europe? Is it worthy of a self-respecting people to occupy a position which exposes them to such criticism as we have recently heard from the parliament and press of England? Loyalty, indeed! [Many voices,—We are all loyal.] Certainly, we are all loyal. Here let me tell you the story of one of the leading literary men of England, who wrote the lectures on the Georges. When he came to the United States to repeat those lectures, which he had delivered in London, he was asked if he was going to let the Canadians hear them. He said no, he feared the Canadians would *suspect his loyalty*, if he read his lectures

to them. Certainly we are all loyal, I say once more; but those voices I recognize as those of some of my friends who are determined protectionists. [Yes, we must have protection for our manufactures.] Just so, and your votes are always cast against any candidate whom you suspect of favoring freedom of trade. You are always ready to tax English goods. [We must protect our manufactures.] Just so, I say again, your loyalty to England does not prevent you from taking care of number one, in the first place. And this patent fact gives point to the worst taunts of the statesmen and public writers in the mother country. It is said that we hang on England, as a child hangs on the mother, for the sake of what we can get from her. They have called it lip loyalty, before long they will call it lollipop loyalty, and next—[clamor of voices,—we don't want to be annexed.] Gentlemen, friends, I did not say a word about being *annexed*, I only said *and next*,—here let me tell you another story: Last month, it is said, that a plump, well-to-do looking gentleman was observed in the building of the Great Exhibition in London, taking lengthened and careful observations with a telescope, pointed to one of the annexes. It was soon discovered that he was a loyal Canadian who would not enter the annexe of the building. He did not like the name, he said, and would not compromise his loyalty by going into such a place. This gentleman, I think, was over scrupulous. I agree with you, gentlemen, we do not want annexation. The whole position of affairs with respect to the United States, the mother country, and ourselves, forbids it. The change which we should prepare for, is that of an independent national position.

I see that you look thoughtful as I say this. And you ought to look thoughtful, for nationality, like manhood, involves great responsibilities. But consider, if we have not self reliance, we cannot have self respect, and if we have not self respect, we are nothing,—we invite taunts and contempt from all the world. With our present growth and promise we have no right to hang on to the mother country an hour longer than the connexion is a mutually acknowledged advantage. If

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It is a growing opinion of British statesmen that we have passed "the youth of nations," and reached maturity; it is not for us to deny it, consistently with our self respect. I know what grave questions and weighty duties the assumption of national responsibilities involves. But is there not manhood enough in our population of two millions and a half to meet them? Does it become us to insist on perpetuating a connexion in which we are publicly told the advantage is all on our side. Does it become us as true friends of the mother country to insist on a connexion which can only be a weakness to her if an obvious contingency should arise, and which is so liable to complicate her foreign policy with respect to this continent? Is it wise to maintain a relation which exposes us to such criticism as we have lately heard from the British Parliament and Press, and which if reiterated can only stir up ill feeling on all sides? Would it not be more wise, more self-respecting on our part, more satisfactory to all parties concerned, to prepare for the event indicated by Lord Brougham, when he said that "without any quarrel, without any coldness or alienation of any sort, but with perfect amity and good will, and on purely voluntary grounds, there should succeed to the Colonial connexion, a connexion between two free and independent states."

Our present position favors a preparation for this event, and recent circumstances remind us how needful it is to bear it in mind. Our mother country is not going to cast us off before we are properly able to take care of ourselves; but we should be unworthy of our parentage if we were to hang back after that time had come. The foundation of our political institutions is laid. We have transplanted as much from England as can be transplanted. We could have not better model than we have taken. We must use what we have, and work out our own course. The popular element must predominate in our affairs. [A voice. — Democracy is a failure] If democracy is a failure, so much the worse for Canada, for Canada is inevitably committed to democracy. Nor is this our doing. Whether for good or ill, it has come to us in the natural and

inevitable order of events. What is the meaning of democracy? A government by the people. Now a government by the people we must have in Canada, for we have no other order of persons among us. We have no order of society among us born to hereditary privileges like the British aristocracy. Nor can we have any such class. It is made positively impossible by the ordering of Providence. If some among us think democracy a failure, let me ask those persons one question. Would you surrender your right to vote at the next election, or consent to have your vote overruled, if a born peer of the realm should demand that the management of your affairs should be left in his hands, or in the hands of a committee of his order? [We will never give up our rights.] No, you will not give up your rights. You, as part of the people of Canada, insist on keeping your political affairs in your own hands. You are born to the right, and you are resolved to retain it. Do not say, then, that democracy is a failure,—do not say that the people cannot be safely trusted to rule, for thereby you slander yourselves. History shows us the failure at one time or another of every form of government,—democratic, aristocratic, and monarchic. And history will continue to show us such failures when the true ends of government are forgotten in a base and selfish scramble for place, power, and pelf. We are committed to democracy,—that is, Canada is committed to political institutions wherein the popular voice is, and must be, predominant. And it is the part of wisdom to use in good faith and with honest purpose the institutions we possess, and seek to improve them as we use them. In this way we shall secure for ourselves and our posterity a hopeful and progressive civilization. We are all liable to excitement, and we should take good care to impose a wholesome check on this, as by a judicious composition of our upper legislative chamber. This is simply a recognition by the people of their own failings, and a wise provision against possible mischief arising therefrom. We cannot, if we would, abolish the controlling influence of the people in our form of government. But we can, and we ought, strive to impress all

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minds with a sense of the dignity and responsibility attached to popular privileges. We cannot, if we would, take the power from the people, but we can and we ought to train the people to an intelligent and just use of that power.

Fortunately for us, our present position to which we have been gradually brought, is one from which we can advance to national independence without any organic strain on existing institutions. Our Governor, nominated by the Crown, is the last link of colonial dependence. This one link, however, is as potent as a thousand, for all purposes of embarrassment to the empire. So long as this exists we must become involved in the possible wars of the empire on this continent—a source of weakness to the mother country and of weakness only. She cannot give us any controlling voice in such purely imperial questions as those of peace and war, and this imposes on her the burden of defending a thousand miles. and more, of exposed frontier. In the event of invasion we should do what we could, but of the measure of this we must always be the judges, the burden and responsibility of defence must needs rest with the mother country. Let the next step of our political progress, then, be to an elective governor. I would approach the change in this way,—first, there must be, of course, the imperial act to authorise the change,—the authorisation should be absolute,—to permit Canada to elect the Governor. The last link would thus be unloosed. And this accomplished, I would have the election made in this way. Let it be our rule that, by joint resolution of both branches of our legislature, the Foreign Minister—not the Colonial Minister—of Great Britain, be requested to furnish the names, say of three men, who by their recognised character, ability, and experience of the British constitutional system, would be fit for the post of Governor of Canada, taking precisely the same place in our Canadian constitutional system that the Sovereign does in the British system. Then let these three names be proposed to our Legislative Council, and the election made by plurality of votes there, providing that the plurality shall include a majority of that body, and arranging the mode of election accordingly. Let the term be

made, say five years, eligible for re-election a second term. By this arrangement we should obtain the services of a class of men not materially different from those we have been accustomed to. Men like Lord Elgin, Sir Edmund Head and Lord Monck, instead of being nominated by Imperial authority, and being here as officials of the empire, would be nominated by request of Canada, and subject to Canadian election and approval. They would then be officials of this country, bound only by the constitution of Canada. A step like this would radically change the relation in which we stand to the mother country, and relieve her of all embarrassment on our account. Until we could raise a competent force of our own, we might retain the services of one or two British regiments to man our more important garrisons, and pay for their service as some of the minor German States do with Prussian and Austrian troops. If the mother country is ready for any arrangement like this, surely we ought to be ready for it. The proper calling of Canada is the development of her resources and the pursuit of peaceful industry. We have an ample domain, and have got as fair a start as country ever had. We can have no quarrel with a mother who has been so generous towards us, and we ought to have no quarrel with neighbors and brethren sprung from the same stock as ourselves. With both we are linked by the strong ties of blood and commerce. We ought not willingly remain a possible embarrassment to Great Britain, but prepare for a new position wherein we should stand on our own responsibility among and before the nations of the earth. And this "without any quarrel," as Lord Brougham says, "without any coldness or alienation of any sort, but with perfect amity and good will" towards our mother country and all the world.